

MEMORANDUM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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NSS, NSA, DOS reviews
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ACTION 34564

TOP SECRET/CODEWORD

November 10, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER
FROM: HAROLD H. SAUNDERS
SUBJECT: Indo-Pak Escalation--Diplomatic Warning

Our reports indicate that over the weekend there was an Indian penetration into East Pakistan and that one or two Indian batallions may still be there. Yesterday, we received indications through intelligence that the Pakistanis were thinking of retaliating. In detail, the facts are as follows:

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This is the only Indian incursion that we can confirm, but the Pakistani press has reported the use of Indian regulars several times, including an alleged attack yesterday on the eastern border supported by armor and artillery.

The specific facts in a situation like this are always hard, and often impossible, to pin down. What does seem clear, however, is that a state of undeclared but growing hostilities now exists between Indian and Pak forces along the East Pakistan border. The role of the Indian units so far appears restricted to actions designed primarily to support the movement of guerrilla units to and from East Pakistan. The Paks so far have limited themselves to shelling Indian positions.

Sisco is tentatively planning to call in Ambassadors Raza and Jha this afternoon to urge de-escalation of this situation. The warning would be the obvious one that this is the way the 1965 war started and that it is important for both sides to see what can be done now to draw apart.

The operational question is that Sisco believes that there would be advantage in having a "White House presence" when he calls in these ambassadors. That would mean my going and sitting in. I told them that I would check into this.

There are two issues here -- the substantive and the bureaucratic:

--On the substantive side, I could well see our expressing concern as a united government to both ambassadors. This could take the form of a phone call from you to both or since you are seeing Jha tomorrow you could do it then. This is the kind of situation which we could regard in retrospect as a missed opportunity if we let it go by without saying anything.

--The question beyond whether you wish to do that on your own is whether we associate ourselves with Sisco's approach to the two ambassadors. If our government were functioning ideally, I would see advantage in showing that we speak with one voice on this. However, given the fact that we are so deeply divided, there could be an advantage in preserving the notion that we act independently here in the White House. My personal wish is that we could avoid on South Asia the kind

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of break with State that we have on the Middle East. I think the President would be better served. But I do not know whether this can be avoided.

My net judgment would be to go this afternoon provided I am assured this exercise will be conducted with some sensitivity toward both. That in itself is difficult with Sisco, and I could well understand your feeling that it would be better for you to take care of this with Jha and Raza.

Saunders sit in with Sisco _____

No _____

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